

111TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 975

Recognizing the potential for a national fresh food financing initiative to provide an effective and economically sustainable solution to the problem of limited access to healthy foods in underserved urban, suburban, and rural low-income communities, while also improving health and stimulating local economic development.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DECEMBER 15, 2009

Ms. SCHWARTZ (for herself, Mr. HOLDEN, Mr. BURGESS, Mr. MEEK of Florida, Mr. PASTOR of Arizona, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. GERLACH, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mr. MOORE of Kansas, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Ms. LEE of California, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. FATTAH, Mr. SERRANO, Mr. MEEKS of New York, Mr. PLATTS, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. RANGEL, Ms. MATSUI, Ms. CHU, Mrs. DAHLKEMPER, Mr. HONDA, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Ms. SUTTON, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Ms. WATSON, Mr. INSLEE, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. CLARKE, Mr. CARDOZA, Mr. HINCHEY, and Ms. WOOLSEY) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Agriculture

RESOLUTION

Recognizing the potential for a national fresh food financing initiative to provide an effective and economically sustainable solution to the problem of limited access to healthy foods in underserved urban, suburban, and rural low-income communities, while also improving health and stimulating local economic development.

Whereas the Nation faces an obesity epidemic in which 30.5 percent of children ages 10 through 17 are overweight or obese;

Whereas the obesity epidemic contributes to increasing rates of chronic illness, including diabetes, heart disease, and cancer;

Whereas the obesity epidemic cost the country \$147 billion in medical expenses in 2008, and this cost is expected to rise in the future;

Whereas the Department of Agriculture conservatively estimates that more than 23 million Americans live in low-income communities and do not have access to a supermarket or large grocery store within one mile of their home;

Whereas more than 70 studies show that access to healthy food is particularly a problem in many low-income urban and rural communities and minority communities, and studies have shown that better access to healthy food in low-income and minority communities is linked to lower levels of obesity and better health outcomes;

Whereas children from low-income families are twice as likely to be overweight as those from higher income families, and African-American and Hispanic children are more likely than Caucasian children to be obese;

Whereas studies show that when healthy foods are available, people will increase their consumption of fruits and vegetables;

Whereas leading public health experts, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the American Heart Association, the Institute of Medicine, and the American Public Health Association, agree that providing improved

access to supermarkets and large grocery stores is needed to improve public health and prevent obesity;

Whereas developing high quality fresh food retail outlets creates jobs, expands markets for farmers in the United States, and supports economic vitality in underserved communities;

Whereas an innovative State-initiated public-private partnership, the Pennsylvania Fresh Food Financing Initiative, is supporting 70 new or improved supermarkets, grocery stores, and farmers' markets in underserved urban and rural communities, leveraging a \$30 million State grant to generate \$165 million in private investment, creating or retaining more than 4,800 part- and full-time jobs, and increasing access to healthy food for more than 400,000 residents;

Whereas a single 57,000-square-foot new store financed by the Pennsylvania initiative and located in a low-income neighborhood in Philadelphia created 370 jobs for area residents and generated \$540,910 of local tax revenue in one year;

Whereas the Pennsylvania initiative has been nationally recognized as an innovative model by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Conference of State Legislatures, Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, and the National Governors Association;

Whereas the State of New York has recently announced a comprehensive effort to increase the number of fresh food markets in underserved communities, including a \$10 million State investment to create the Healthy Foods, Healthy Communities Initiative, which will provide grants and loans to eligible food markets across the State;

Whereas States across the country, including Illinois, Louisiana, and New Jersey, have recognized the problem of food access in many low-income communities and are working to create financing programs to encourage supermarkets, grocery stores, and other fresh food markets to locate in these underserved communities; and

Whereas a national fresh food financing initiative would provide communities across the United States with critical one-time loan and grant financing to help fresh food retailers overcome initial barriers to entry into underserved, low-income communities, and would support renovation and expansion of existing stores so they can provide the healthy foods that communities want and need: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives recog-
 2 nizes the potential for a national fresh food financing ini-
 3 tiative—

4 (1) to provide an effective and economically sus-
 5 tainable solution to the problem of limited access to
 6 healthy foods in underserved urban, suburban, and
 7 rural low-income communities; and

8 (2) to help reduce health disparities and im-
 9 prove the health of families and children, create
 10 jobs, and stimulate local economic development in
 11 low-income communities.

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